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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1909.

## **JUDGE WILLIAMS'S REMARKABLE POSITION.**

If the Roanoke dispatches published yesterday afternoon may be taken as authoritative, Judge Williams completely misses the point of the disagreeable situation in which he now finds himself. The question confronting him, and the people of the State, is not whether he will voluntarily return to McDowell, W. Va., for trial or will be carried thither under the escort of a West Virginia officer of the court.

Judge Williams is credited with taking the ground that he will return for trial, provided that justice and bodily safety are guaranteed him. From several different points of view the position is an astonishing one. From the Attorney-General-elect of the Commonwealth of Virginia, it carries an extraordinary reiteration upon the judiciary of a sister State. It implies very strongly that the court at McDowell is, or may be, subject to private influence or political malice. But this discountenance is only an incidental feature of his very singular position. In Virginia Judge Williams is Attorney-General-elect. But in West Virginia he is merely a practicing attorney who has gotten mixed up in a personal altercation, and in consequence has been caught by the machinery of the law. No more than Smith or Brown or Jones has he right to sit in Wytheville and attempt to dictate the terms and conditions of his trial. Indeed the very fact that he is neither Smith, Brown nor Jones, but the chosen legal representative of a people, makes it all the more incumbent upon him to show a punctilious respect for the forms of law. Judge Williams is not doing this in the least. On the contrary, his position is correctly understood, he purposes to show open defiance of these forms. Setting an example of dignified and orderly submission to the lawful workings of justice is the last thing in the world that he could now be described as doing.

Judge Williams long ago promised the West Virginia authorities that he would return for trial at the proper time. There have been no developments, and probably there could be no developments, which would absolve him from this promise. Nor can Judge Williams possibly escape trial, no matter how much he might desire it, no matter to what unexpected lengths he is willing to go to gain his desire. The wheels of justice, in which he individually is caught, have started grinding and there is no stopping them. The requisition papers, which were issued last week and which may be in at any hour, will almost certainly be honored. There is no way in which honoring them could be properly avoided. The matter is purely formal, governed strictly by statute, and the statute makes no exceptions whatever for fear of impartiality or suspicions of political malice. As matters now stand, therefore, requisition papers for the person of our Attorney-General-elect are out in the course of a few days. And what will happen then? Judge Williams indicates that if he is not assured of safety of life and limb and a just trial, he will resist extradition. Stripped of legal phraseology, what does this mean? When the West Virginia sheriff or other officer appears at his home in Wytheville, what does Judge Williams propose to do? Is it imaginable that he, personally, means to resist the sheriff, personally?

If Judge Williams had quietly returned for trial at the first indication that he was wanted, he would have taken with him the sympathy of the State. Already his curious attitude has resulted in a very noticeable chilling of this sympathy toward his case. It is to be feared that effects have been even less favorable in West Virginia, where his position is as well calculated to arouse ill-feeling and prejudice as any position well could be. Even now, if he quietly returns to submit to trial, as by every consideration he should do, he can rely upon his friends and the press of the State to watch every move in his trial with a hawk-like vision and to resent any appearance of injustice with a vigor which would make him the centre of a cause celebre, a possible martyr and popular hero. But if he waits to submit to the indignity of "requisition," and worse yet, if he "resists extradition" in a personal and physical sense—for in the final analysis, it must come down to this—his situation will be much less fortunate. In such a case, it is safe to say that he would find that he has forfeited a large part of the regard of a people who only the other day honored him with a distinguished trust.

## **THE TAX-DODGERS' TRUST.**

The largest, toughest trust with which Virginia has to deal is that of the tax-dodgers. Wise laws and efficient administration are making the control of other trusts increasingly possible. Complicated laws and inefficient enforcement of them make the control of the tax-dodgers entirely impossible. A large proportion of the citizens of the State belong to this obnoxious company of tax-dodgers. By tacit agreement, these men, in other respects honorable, are annually defrauding the State of at least a fifth

## **IDLE WIVES AND TOLLING HUSBANDS.**

In Mrs. Newell Dwight Hillis, of Brooklyn, the despised and betrayed male sex has found a friend and champion. Wherever Mrs. Hillis finds two or three suffragettes gathered together,

or, there she is greatly tempted to pause and deliver a few pointed remarks. "There is no class of women," she told the Emma Willard Association in New York some weeks ago, "with so much leisure, who get so much and give so little as the American women." The American woman, she then indicated, is selfish, idle and not particularly useful. Now we find her talking to the suffragettes of Chicago thus:

You talk of your wrongs, but I tell you that your husbands have wronged a thousand times more bitter. They must work hard while you are idle; they must find the money to pay for your vanities. No wonder the death rate among husbands is greater than that among wives.

Utterances such as these will elicit involuntary salivations from a million husbands. From a woman to women they are certainly not wanting in impressiveness. In them is revealed an iconoclastic vigor of independent thought that belies the petticoated tradition. Moreover, there is truth in these words. We hear a good deal about homes where the husband is a drunken ne'er-do-well or gilded profligate, while the wife industriously washes clothes or nobly distributes alms to the poor, as the case may be. Less said about the reverse of the picture because, perhaps, it is a commonplace. There are many homes where the division of labor is very unequal in the direction indicated by Mrs. Hillis, many homes where the woman's practical contribution is a small fraction of the man's, many homes where the wife, if she is not wholly idle, cannot possibly be said to pay her way.

But there is an answer to make to this lady's charges of idleness and want of usefulness. Why is she so hostile to the suffragette movement? If that represents merely a querulous feminine dissatisfaction and feeble complaint against legal inequities of which very few women are even aware, sensible women need lavish no sympathy upon it. But not every observer who looks below the surface is ready to dismiss it so lightly. That it exists at all shows, at least, that women are meditating intelligently and soberly about their own position in the social body. Mrs. Hillis, who complains so vigorously of that position, could hardly find fault with such meditations. It will probably be a long time before woman's demand for the ballot will seem, in itself, of any especial importance in this country. Yet it is a present fact that the suffragettes furnish just now the only organized propaganda of protest against the present status of woman in existence. The propaganda will hardly end with the bestowal of the ballot, which, so we take it, is only a none too consequent bubble on the surface. The larger meaning of "votes for women," if it has any larger meaning, must be the desire, perhaps vaguely defined as yet, to develop the independence, usefulness and practical coequality of one-half the population of the civilized world. Such a movement, however much some of its manifestations may displease, might well have the general sympathy of women like Mrs. Hillis, since it finally aims to overthrow exactly the same conditions which she so severely castigates.

## **PLACING THE BLAME.**

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